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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses why school librarians are well qualified to write for students and describes the following aspects of becoming a successful writer: (1) manuscript development, including choosing the type of material to write, gathering materials, deciding on the level of intended readers, and getting a manuscript illustrated; (2) publishing issues, including how to investigate publishers, contact publisher's representatives, or decide on self-publishing; (3) marketing concerns, including the services of publishing houses and opportunities for self-marketing; and (4) business responsibilities. (KRN)

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BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

WRITING, PUBLISHING AND MARKETING

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So, you'd like to write! **Why not?** School librarians are teachers - first - last - and always. Librarians have a special desire to bring information and enjoyment to others throught books and media. Library users want information or just a book to enjoy. Librarians want to bring the right books and the user together. How often has the librarian wished for a title that would be just right for the patron? How often has the librarian thought " I could write what is needed "?

Fiction and short stories seem to be the type of writing prefered by most beginning writers. Poetry is a popular type of writing for authors but not easy to get published or sold. Non-fiction , both in article and longer forms are the most needed, Easily read, well illustrated information will not only serve the beginning student but those who are not familiar with the subject of any age. Plays, which have numerous characters,are easiely costumed and staged are in real demand.

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

As you work with your collection and students you will know where the needs are most pressing. How many times have you located the right material but the level or format would not be suitable for the user? Much has been written about the need for materials - fiction and non-fiction - which will be in keeping with the children's background. The child who lives in a rural area will not have the same knowledge or interests as the one who has never been out of the slums of a big city. Students in Australia will not have the same home and community backgrounds as those in Italy or Ireland.

The curriculum of the various grades differ in schools around the world. Some countries require the teaching of various subjects in the early grades. Others delay the offerings or make them optional for the student. The goal of the school librarian is to have on hand information for the enrichment of the curriculum and for the enjoyment of the person.

informational piece. This would not apply to books intended to be read to young children.(Example - *Santa Grows Up in Mother Goose Land*)

You are the one person who knows best the needs and background of the students with whom you work. You have the training as a media specialist. You have the qualifications and experience as a teacher. You know the curriculum of all the grades within your school or schools. You have had training and first hand experience in child growth and development You know the characteristics of the community and backgrounds of the faculty and students.You are aware of the gaps and the needs of your collection. You have selection aids which may or may not be helpful to you in selecting the book and non-book materials needed in your school library.

Hopefully, your confidence in your ability to write has been firmly established. You have made up your mind on the type of writing you want to do. Now where to start?

You will need to do intense research for any type of non-fiction writing. Be very certain that all facts are accurate. You will have three times as much material as you will need for a children's book.

Will you be able to write on a typewritter or a computer ?Of course there is still a pen or pencil but before going to the printer you may find that it is advantageous to get you script into a better form.

When a manuscript is typed and carried to a printer they will have to type set the manuscript. They make errors. You will have to proof read every word. This is usually done at the printers. Proofing under pressure is very stressful. If possible take someone with you who will read with more objectivity than the author. Drawings, illustrations, etc. will have to be situated in the script after the typesetting is done.

Materials written on the computer and copied on a laser printer are ready be photographed and put right into the printing process.Drawings, illustrations, etc. will be in place at the time the manuscript is photographed. Proffing will have been done before the manuscript is carried to the printer.

The length of your book, article, etc. will depend upom the reading level of the intended reader. The younger the age level the shorter the story or

Short sentences, easy words and many appropriate illustrations are enjoyed by the beginning reader.

Keep the book or article short and to the point. Remember that teachers require book reports from students at an early age. Even in high school most teachers will not accept a book which has less than one-hundred pages.This may include illustrations which are sometime an entire page. Short books are very popular with students who are slow readers or who are pressed for time.

Illustrations add to the attractiveness of most writings. You will decide if black and white or color are most appropriate for your story or article. Colored illustrations are more expensive. Be sure and see work in both black and white and color when you interview artists.

Artists are anxious to illustrate books for children. If there is a university or art school in your area you will fine it easy to locate artists. There are good artists who are not connected with schools. Spread the word around that you are looking for an illustrator.They will find you.

Interview and look at the portfolios of at least four artists. Determine, as best you can ,if they have caught the spirit of your writing. Will they get right onto your illustrations? When you have decided on the person have a clear understanding of the price they will charge. Two suggested kinds of contracts are:

(1) Agree upon the total cost. One half to be paid at the beginning of the work, the other half paid when the job is satisfactorily completed. (Example - Appendix) Work closely with the artist during the entire process. You are paying - have it done the way you see best. You will own the illustrations. You will use them as you see fit.You have the copyright. This method costs more up front but there is less bookwork to be done.

(2) Agree upon the total price per copy. As copies are sold the artist is reimbursed for the art work. The artist retains the copyright. In this way the author is out less money in the beginning. This makes for more bookkeeping work. It also restricts the use of the art work.

If you are writing fiction, poetry .etc. you will have written and rewritten many times until you are fairly satisfied with the formate and words used.There comes a time in writing when the author has to decide that the time has come to stop revising.

If you have had your manuscript accepted by a publisher most of the decisions on cover, art work, etc. will be made between you and the publisher's representative. Your royality and obligations will be established before printing begins. You will be expected to proof read. They will furnish the Library of Congress and the International Standard Book Number number for both the hard and soft bindings. You will be paid a percentage of sales as the books are sold. They will be responsible for promoting ,selling and paying you royality.

For the independent publisher you will have to locate a printing company who can do the work. If possible find a company who can bind both the soft and hard covers. Many of the printers can do a good job with the soft cover but have to send the copy tcanother company for the library biding.

This results in extra cost and less satisfactory work. Get estimates of prices and time limits from more than one printer. They will help you to decide on materials, color and format for the covers.

You will have the book complete ,as you want it to be published ,when you take it to the printers. You will be responsible for furnishing the title page, dedication ,table of contents ,Library of Congress (LC) number and the International Standard Book Number.(ISBN) and any other special items you want included in the finished book.

Payment to the printer is usually made, one-half when the contract is made, one-half when the books are delivered. Delivery charges are paid by you. The cost of printing depends in part on the quality of the paper used, number of illustrations,type of illustrations -black/white or color,quality of binding and number printed. The more copies printed the less the per unit cost.

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Your best market will be school and public libraries. Very few systems buy bulk orders. If you can get your title on the State Recommended List for supplementary reading or even as a text book you will have bulk sales in the educational field.

Join in with a independent marketintg group. In this way you will have help in selling,publicity and marketing. Ususally the president or Board of an independent organization will have book representatives in the various states whose time and efforts are devoted to selling. While it is necessary to give them a commission they are well worth the money.

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All of these suggestions sound like lots of trouble. It is worth all of the hard work and worry to see the book you have created in the hands of students. When they tell you they have enjoyed your writing you are ready to start working all over again. Try it - and see for yourself the satisfaction of seeing your ideas in print and being enjoyed by children.